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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2015**Carolyn Hissong**

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<http://www.citywatchla.com/lead-stories-hidden/9708-want-to-end-la-s-homeless-crisis-say-no-to-the-politicians>
City Watch**LA Congress Of Neighborhoods: It's About Politics And Public Service**

By Denyse Selesnick

When someone outside of Los Angeles asks where you live...the answer is invariably 'LA' and for some it's 'The Valley.' That is rather arrogant since it refers to the San Fernando Valley and we do have several other Valleys in Los Angeles. Yes, we live in this wonderful sprawling City, but we really live in neighborhoods. It's where we raise our families, go to the grocery store or religious institutions, watch our kids play sports like soccer and make lifelong friends. Our neighborhood is our haven when the world seems like it's just too much. This is home!

The Neighborhood Council (NC) system was initiated by former Councilman Joel Wachs to develop community spirit on a local level. It was brought to fruition by former Mayor Hahn and added to the City Charter by the citizens of Los Angeles.

Today, there are ninety-six neighborhood councils covering every part of this city. For the past twelve years, they have played a vital role in truly representing their communities, not in foreign policy or macro-economics, but in areas of everyday life.

Neighborhood Council activists work to make sure their streets are clean and cared for...they work with local responders to ensure their community is safe in case of a disaster...they keep track of what elected and appointed local officials are doing to provide the services and projects that are needed in their community and the entire city.

Once a year there is a Neighborhood Council Congress which is held at City Hall but planned and executed by NC representatives from all over the City. It is a full day of forty workshops for Neighborhood Council Boards of Directors who are often referred to as "volunteers," which they are in the literal sense. They don't get paid for their time or aggravation... but in reality they are elected officials, voted into office by members of their community.

The annual Congress was held this past Saturday under the Chairmanship of Ms. Cindy Cleghorn from the Sunland Tujunga NC. More than 650 attendees came to soak up the atmosphere of City Hall and mix with several city councilmembers as well as other elected officials, including the Mayor and City Council President. That was the icing on the cake.

There were workshops on every conceivable areas under NC jurisdiction. This included topics such as learning how to "Say No to Developers, how to run a successful meeting, recruiting and training new leaders, and political etiquette (and, yes, there is such a thing!) Dakota Smith, a journalist at the Daily News, along with Moderator Commissioner Lydia Grant and myself spoke to a standing room only audience on how to work with the media.

Kevin James, President of the Public Works Committee, headed a panel with the heads of his departments so the audience would know whom to call when there was a problem and how to develop a relationships. I think it is harder not to return a call from someone you know.

About fifty percent of the attendees were new or had served on their Boards less than five years. One of the positive things that have happened to the Neighborhood Councils this year is that Council President Herb Wesson has re-arranged the council committees and placed the Neighborhood Council system under the jurisdiction of the Rules Committee that he chairs. He opened the event in his usual warm and humorous manner, setting the stage for the rest of the day. Under his Rules Committee, there have already been changes to several items the NC's have long been lobbying for.

City Attorney Mike Feuer talked about the importance of the NCs to individual communities and introduced some of the community-based assistant City Attorneys who are actually working in the new system he inaugurated. Feuer said that the NCs, along with the attorneys, have a better chance to combat crime in their particular area because they know all the players. However, I take exception to the stringent rules that his attorneys present to the Neighborhood Councils. The first words out of

their mouths are usually why something can't be done. This has to be modified.

New Councilmembers David Ryu and Marqueece Harris-Dawson both remarked how they had interacted with the neighborhood councils in their area. And, of course, Controller Ron Galperin is the poster child for the NCs. He always acknowledges how he came up through the NC ranks.

Mayor Eric Garcetti closed the day with a challenge for NCs to help him with the "Clean Streets" Initiative. He stressed the importance and how influential the Neighborhood Councils and its stakeholders are in the City and he looks forward to further cooperation.

Ms. Cleghorn was especially thankful to her city-wide committee that has been planning this event for the last six months. When asked her "take away" from the event, she said NC members should "have a vision which will keep your NC focused and on track; take photos, research rules, fact check, inform yourself, talk to the department, listen-listen-listen; know the difference between an emotional opinion and opinion based on facts. The community needs (and wants) to be involved in the decisions that affect them. Be reasonable... right isn't always right! Projects can be better when working together and we will accomplish more by always being kind."

Usually the "Empowerment Awards," given by the Department and the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) are held at the same time as the Congress. This year, they were held at a separate event at City Hall. More than 320 people attended, and undoubtedly it will continue to be a separate event, according to Lydia Grant who chaired the dinner.

Each BONC Commissioner, representing a different areas of the city, bestowed an award on a Neighborhood Council that had performed above and beyond for their community.

In addition, EmpowerLA, the city department overseeing the NCs, presented individual "spirit" awards.

The winners were:

North Valley: Sylmar NC for their outstanding Equestrian event which showed the importance of working with other like-minded groups and showed how important it was to the lifestyle of the community. It resulted in the City designating a "K" overlay in certain areas which cannot be broken. The first of its kind.

South Valley: North Hollywood Northeast NC and North Hollywood West NC, with the help of other community organizations, have transformed a long-time hazardous and blighted area into a water-saving garden and artistic landmark. The project also helped develop new friendships, and an open awareness of how much can be achieved when Neighborhood Councils cooperate with one another.

Central LA: Westlake South NC has recruited a Board reflecting all ethnicities in the community. Has conducted the free Neighbor-to-Neighbor event in MacArthur Park to connect people to the NC, to city services, and local non-profit services. They have also sponsored an Immigration Legal Fair, working with organizations involved with immigration rights.

Central LA: Also from Central, Mid-City West NC has responded to community constituents requests to create safe routes for bicycling and walking. They created a comprehensive plan and received a grant of \$806,765 to create two bike routes. The project was ranked 7th of 15 bicycle infrastructure projects. This project proves that neighborhood councils can respond to community needs and get big things done through strong and diligent advocacy.

East, LA: the Eagle Rock NC is being honored for several reasons. They make sure that all meetings, including land use, are on the web site. They have taken a hard look at the structure of their neighborhood council and made important infrastructure changes. They submitted written recommendations on every significant Planning Department case and Conditional Use Permit in Eagle Rock. It was only one of two neighborhoods in all of LA to take advantage of a state grant for tree well cutting that was administered by the Council District. Board members walked the streets of Eagle Rock to plot locations for over 250 new sidewalk tree wells.

West LA: West LA NC holds eight free concerts and movie nights to bring the community together. They recently partnered with NIKE to re-open the skate plaza and do a renovation at their civic center plaza. The West LA NC was an integral partner in the renaming of the Sawtelle area as the "Sawtelle Japan Town" area, recognizing the historic Japanese community.

South LA: Empowerment Congress Southwest Area Neighborhood Development Council has conducted sidewalk summits to discuss sidewalk issues. They have developed outstanding cooperation with schools, neighborhood housing services and elected officials to improve the quality of their stakeholders' lives. They are an excellent example of the success of strategic collaborations.

Harbor Area: Harbor Gateway North NC's Emergency Preparedness Committee mobilized 63 block leaders to go door to door in their neighborhoods with small bags of information on how to prepare for a major emergency. A survey was given to residents in an effort to identify those who had medical skills, construction skills, own generators or are Ham radio operators. Information from the surveys laid the groundwork for sponsoring CERT classes during May and June of this year, the first such classes in ten years. In addition, a number of stakeholders began preparing to pass the Ham radio license exam, which was given in July. No matter where you live in the City of Los Angeles... Neighborhood Councils are at work. Do support them and their activities. They make your life better!

As always...comments welcome.

City Watch

Memo To GM Barnette And LA Council: Animal Control Officers Are At Risk

By Phyllis Daugherty

On September 16, two days after LAPD announced anticipation of a BMW i3 and Tesla Model S P85D as black-and-white loaners, the City Council's Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee (Koretz/Ryu/Harris-Dawson) heard a dismal report on the condition of LA Animal Services' fleet of Animal Rescue Vehicles (ARV's.)

None of these animal-collection trucks have been replaced since 2000-2003, according to General Services Asst. GM Angela Sherick-Bright and Fleet Services Manager Richard Coulson, who explained there has not been enough funding.

These high-mileage trucks are driven by solitary Animal Control Officers to animal-related emergencies and humane

investigations, 24/7, throughout the 469 square miles of urban and rural Los Angeles. They rescue injured, abused, stray, abandoned, sick, lost or unwanted animals and respond to calls of animal attacks on people or pets and other animal-related public-safety threats. They also respond to calls by LAPD to remove animals from the scene of dangerous criminal investigations.

Following are a few of the alarming ARV mechanical/equipment failures that have been reported by officers and which I have relayed at Council and other city meetings during the past year:

A steering wheel came off in the hands of an officer while driving.

Brakes failed, forcing the officer to put the vehicle in neutral and apply the emergency brake. Neither stopped the truck, so she was forced to sideswipe a concrete post to halt the vehicle.

One truck died every time a right-hand turn was made.

On another, the driver's door continually flew open during turns.

Compartments where animals were held had to be taped closed.

Tape has also been necessary to secure the orange flashing-light bar.

Recently a compartment containing equipment was taped closed because it could not be latched and two animal cages fell into the street, unbeknownst to the officer. A kind motorist witnessed this and returned the cages to the shelter.

A truck picking up animals broke down near downtown within the past few weeks' heat wave and had to be towed.

GM Brenda Bamette and Field Operations Director Mark Salazar cannot claim ignorance. Besides official reporting policies, in a small department of less than 400 employees, there are no secrets.

But, apparently they have not felt strongly enough about the safety of their employees, the animals or the public to advise the Mayor and Council of the deterioration and dangers of these old trucks that are too broken to fix.

Richard Coulson of Fleet Services candidly admitted that, although the trucks are safe after servicing by his department, they are old and "falling apart," have high repeated-maintenance needs and frequent on-the-road breakdowns. He said it is due to being old and not being replaced.

However, even with this knowledge, there is no plan to replace the aged vehicles in the near future. According to General Services representatives, presently only 5 new vehicles are on order, 3 more are anticipated next year and then 9 more the following year. By that time, the remaining majority of the vehicles will be 18 years old! The Assistant GM said they would order more if funding is provided.

Considering that San Diego Animal Services rotates one-quarter of its ARV's every four years, and Los Angeles County's scheduled replacement (funding permitted) is every five years or 100,000 miles, what is Los Angeles City's excuse for leaving these decrepit vehicles on the streets for 15 years?

Councilman Koretz asked for an estimate of costs to replace the fleet and "catch up." However, his total concern was that the trucks would break down and cause a lack of ventilation to the animal compartments. He did not mention the officers or their safety.

ACO's check to assure there is adequate ventilation and use their expertise to keep the animals as comfortable as possible. In many cases, they drive each animal immediately to the shelter. As a result, there have been no casualties caused by overheating in LAAS trucks.

However, contrary to information provided by management that the average time is only 15 minutes, it can be a very long drive back to a shelter in L.A. traffic. For example, one officer reported driving 55 minutes to travel 33 miles in the Valley to pick up an injured animal; and an animal rescued in Watts must be taken over 20 miles to the Harbor shelter.

The current trucks do not have heat for animals in cold weather or air-conditioning for the blistering heat we are currently experiencing. There are numerous companies specializing in animal-transport equipment that could quickly provide an entire fleet of 50 temperature-controlled (heat and A/C,) fully equipped animal-control vehicles. Los Angeles must make this a priority.

This lack of vehicle-replacement strategy and concern for personnel is another example of why the Department of Animal Services must be returned to oversight by the Public Safety Committee of the Council, with the police and fire departments—and where officer safety matters.

It should not take the death of an officer or civilian and lawsuits many times the price of new vehicles to get city officials' attention. This dirty little secret is now out. Can the city risk allegations of "willful negligence," ignoring Animal Control Officers' safety while other departments drive Teslas?

Interestingly, according to the Animal Services' Fleet Inventory, administrators were assigned 2008 Prius and Civic Hybrid sedans, and other 2008 vehicles are listed for the Special Operations Section, supervised by Mark Salazar. Thus, some vehicle replacement occurred in this allegedly cash-strapped department.

And, a special vehicle just appeared at the North Central shelter—a 2015 John Deere Gator, 4-seater UTV and trailer (resembling a military dune buggy). Two such vehicles and trailers were requested last year by Director Salazar to be purchased from the Animal Welfare Trust Fund (charitable-donation fund to help shelter animals) for the select SMART team. The request was denied by the Animal Services Commission on October 14, 2014.

A California Public Records Act request was submitted on Sept. 18, 2015, to determine the total cost and funding source for the 2015 Gator and trailer and if it was purchased through General Services.

City Watch

Want To End LA's Homeless Crisis? Say No To Politicians

By Tim Deegan

Recently, a homeless woman, making her point by shaking a can with a few coins in it, knocked on my Mid City neighbor's door and asked for a donation. Bold? Desperate? The start of a trend?

Today, more and more homeless people are squatting in sidewalk homesteads in neighborhoods all over our city. Makeshift tents, lean-tos and unprotected bedrolls have been "transitioned" to residential side streets. Quieter streets where there are less

cars driving by to ignore them. And where there are more people around to connect with...even by going door-to-door to ask for money.

The sight of people who are experiencing homelessness is everywhere in our city: no neighborhood is immune. It is not a black and white issue; many shades of grey make it a very challenging issue to resolve.

City leaders acknowledge that there are 22,000 homeless people in Los Angeles. But there is no plan yet to move them from the streets into permanent, sustainable and supportive housing. Although some good efforts are being attempted, not enough is being done to find a model that works. The lack of affordable housing, another city-wide crisis, is exacerbated by wide-spread evictions followed by booms in the building of expensive housing -- and not enough affordable units to replace what has been demolished.

A complicating factor in this challenge is that many homeless people have mental health and substance abuse issues that need to be addressed. They require more than kind words and a free lunch or some spare change.

The mentally ill homeless must be made a top priority because they need immediate access to medical help. They cannot "self-help" themselves into recovery.

A very serious commitment on the county level would be a good start. County Supervisors Solis, Ridley-Thomas, Kuehl, Knabe, and Antonovich have the ability to fill the leadership vacuum and order immediate help. They have the financial and program resources; only a majority of three is needed to expedite triage for our mentally ill homeless.

The Supervisors are a powerful class of public servants with vast experience dealing with mental health issues. The County Department of Mental Health is the largest county mental health department in the country. Los Angeles City has nothing compared to it -- in size, scope, funding or experience.

So how can LA find new solutions for helping the homeless? As the city "builds out," we see towering construction cranes across the cityscape. Why not require developers to help mitigate the plight of the homeless the same way they respond to NIMBYs that want traffic and parking mitigations for projects built in their neighborhoods? A slice of every development project budget should be allocated to fund street-level solutions for the homeless -- such as access to hot water and portable restrooms, and designated spaces for temporary outdoor urban encampments.

Providing this financial resource could become part of a developer's cost of doing business -- just like obtaining a building permit. Let's institutionalize it and price it.

This segment of the private sector can play an important role because cash is a developer's natural solution for many things -- unlike the political rhetoric that is the coin of the realm for elected officials.

Let's also try a new paradigm in the political sector of the city -- one that breaks through the tense gridlock of politicians' good intentions and bad results. Sure, elected city officials want to show sensitivity to the issues of homeless people. But it may be better for them to leave management of the homeless issue to the professionals and to the street-level volunteers who know their clients by name and by needs. This is not the place for politicians.

The official city response to the homeless crisis has been worse than feeble: pathetic is not even a strong enough word to describe it. It has been reported that about \$100 million has already been spent (mostly given to the police) in efforts to solve this problem. But this has not made a dent. One report suggests that the homeless population has not diminished, but has grown by 12% since 2013. Another piece of bad news is the vaunted plan to house homeless veterans in VA facilities, a goal that has had its target date pushed back. All these failures have been reported in just the past several weeks.

Unbelievably, against that list of disappointing results, our political leaders have just declared a "state of emergency" and plan to devote another \$100 million to the homeless crisis. The initiative was launched to show that the city is serious. And maybe this time, the funding will go to street-level service providers that are often the mom and pop, grassroots volunteer-driven groups that work directly with homeless people.

Councilmember David Ryu (left) came into office 100 days ago pledging to listen to the community before making decisions. He has a chance to stake out a leadership position in council chambers by insisting that they hold public hearings on how to use this proposed \$100 million -- before the LA City Council spends another dollar on the problem.

Ryu brings to the conversation his experience in community health care; and he says he knows something about chronic homelessness. Since he is fresh on the job, has prior experience, and a willingness to stand up to the issue, he may offer the best chance for insuring that street-level service providers and the people they help get a fair hearing. These people need to be part of the decision on how these funds are spent.

Many in City Hall, in the executive suite and around the council chamber horseshoe, are anxious to be seen doing something about the homeless situation. However, they seem like multiple emperors mounted on their horses -- but without any clothes. A cavalry of confusion.

Are the politicians really that clueless about what to do? Do they think that by issuing press releases and wantonly spending tens of millions of dollars that their brio and bucks will solve the problem?

At the rate they're going, this spending spree will see them allocate almost a quarter billion dollars to this problem in a very short period of time. If private enterprise were to spend that much with almost zero return on investment, their leaders would become jobless.

How can we move forward? Developers should be brought in to finance street-level services, the County Supervisors should fund help for the mentally ill homeless, the street-level service providers should be better supported, and many city politicians should be taken out of play.

Then what about the rest of us?

As individuals, we cannot oscillate: too much is at stake. Homeless lives matter. Homelessness in a City of Gold has dulled its shine and the reflection on its leaders is tarnished. The time has come to either bolt our doors and turn our backs -- or unlock our hearts and open our arms.

If you choose to get involved and help make a difference, you can volunteer at one of the many street-level groups across the city that help the homeless. Here are just two that do good work. There are many others.

The Greater West Hollywood Food Coalition. I volunteered with them for many years. On a gritty street corner in an industrial section of Hollywood, this organization feeds the homeless a hot, nutritious dinner 365 nights a year. They help provide supportive housing to their clients, and, in partnership with the UCLA Mobile Clinic Project, there is a health clinic run by the UCLA Schools of Public Health and Medicine that comes weekly to the food line. They provide free health services to the homeless.

For over three decades, through the tenure of several mayors and dozens of city council members, the Food Coalition has survived – and with almost no attention from any of them.

Midtown Los Angeles Homeless Coalition. This is another important organization. The group implements the Coordinated Entry System (CES), a countywide program that emphasizes the need to “know”, “assist” and “refer.” The CES system is being used in other parts of the city, such as Hollywood, Northeast LA, Silverlake, Westlake and Koreatown. Some funding comes from the United Way of Los Angeles. The focus of the Midtown initiative is connecting two homeless sub-populations, the chronically homeless and homeless veterans, to permanent supportive housing.

We have seen some of what works (and lots of what does not) in the struggle to address the needs of homeless people and the issue of homelessness. So let's try this: say yes to developers – yes to individuals working in street-level programs ... and no to politicians. This formula could work. We just need to remove the political middlemen.

If your heart is ready to help, then that will be your compass, finding a path, a way to do the most good. And the best part is... you can start today.

CD 4:

1 Arrested, 1 Detained In Connection With Hit-And-Run Of LAPD Bike Officer In Sherman Oaks

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2015/09/28/lapd-bike-officer-struck-by-hit-and-run-driver-in-sherman-oaks/>

Villa Carlotta's Tenant Warriors Fight To Save Homes And History

<http://www.citywatchla.com/lead-stories-hidden/9705-villa-carlotta-s-tenant-warriors-fight-to-save-homes-and-history>

The coolest new hotel in Los Angeles isn't even expensive

<http://nypost.com/2015/09/28/the-coolest-new-hotel-in-los-angeles-isnt-even-expensive/>

Grace Jones does what she feels at Hollywood Bowl

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/posts/la-et-ms-grace-jones-hollywood-bowl-review-20150928-story.html>

Health, Mental Health & Education:

LAUSD Soliciting Feedback From Parents On Proposed School Year Changes

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2015/09/28/lausd-soliciting-feedback-from-parents-on-proposed-school-year-changes/>

Zimmer charter group CEO square off over charter plan

<http://laschoolreport.com/zimmer-charter-group-ceo-square-off-over-charter-plan/>

LAUSD and 40 other advocates urge governor to sign pre K bill

<http://laschoolreport.com/lausd-and-40-other-advocates-urging-governor-to-sign-tk-bill/>

UTLA says its facing unprecedented web of attacks on all sides

<http://laschoolreport.com/utla-says-its-facing-unprecedented-web-of-attacks-on-all-sides/>

3 years later, results of LAUSD's arts experiment are mixed

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/09/28/54634/three-years-later-results-of-lausd-s-arts-experime/>

Sick Irony: Minority Administrators Help Keep LA's Inner City Schools In A Cycle Of Failure

<http://www.citywatchla.com/lead-stories-hidden/9698-sick-irony-minority-administrators-help-keep-la-s-inner-city-schools-in-a-cycle-of-failure>

Arts, Parks & River:

California kicks in \$25 million towards LA's crown jewel riverfront land buy

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/09/28/54694/state-kicks-in-25-million-toward-la-s-crown-jewel/>

Full Tour: The Broad Art Museum Finally Opens In Downtown LA

<http://brighamyen.com/2015/09/28/full-tour-the-broad-art-museum-finally-opens-in-downtown-la/>

Entertainment & Facilities:

Steve Mosko upped to chairman of Sony Pictures Television

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-steve-mosko-upped-to-chairman-of-sony-pictures-television->

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=6dadf90d0d&view=pt&q=%22food%20coalition%22&qs=true&search=query&msg=150186d7430f3235&siml=150186...> 5/6

[20150928-story.html](#)

Transportation:

New LA smart benches will charge bus riders phones while they wait

<http://mynews1a.com/government/2015/09/28/new-l-a-smart-benches-will-charge-bus-riders-phones-while-they-wait/>

Governor Brown vetoes off hours use of carpool lanes on 2 LA freeways

<http://www.latimes.com/local/politics/la-me-pol-sac-carpool-lanes-20150929-story.html>

The Ultimate Way To Minimize Traffic And Maximize Quality Of Life: Work From Home

<http://www.citywatchla.com/lead-stories-hidden/9703-the-ultimate-way-to-minimize-traffic-and-maximize-quality-of-life-work-at-home>

LA Bullet Train Wants To Test Drill For Tunnel Under The San Gabriel Mountains

http://la.curbed.com/archives/2015/09/high_speed_railLos_angeles_underground_tunnel.php

City of Los Angeles:

Street Vendor Ban Goes Into Effect At LA Parks

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Street-Vendors-Now-Banned-From-Selling-in-LA-Parks-329864441.html>

Krekorian's Unique Billboard Plan Allows Them On City Property, Raise Millions For City Services

<http://www.citywatchla.com/lead-stories-hidden/9702-krekorian-s-unique-billboard-plan-allow-them-on-city-property-raise-millions-for-city-services>

Los Angeles Area:

Critics says overhaul of LA jails not enough

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/09/28/54677/critics-say-overhaul-of-la-jails-not-enough/>

Former Sheriff Lee Baca will not get immunity at Paul Tanaka's trial

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20150928/former-sheriff-lee-baca-will-not-get-immunity-at-paul-tanakas-trial>

Ex inmates want LA County to stop dumping mentally ill inmates on skid row

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-jail-skid-row-releases-20150928-story.html>

